



# THE MINERAL VEIN

Official Newsletter of

**THE MINERAL SOCIETY OF MANITOBA**

**DECEMBER 2016**

## NOVEMBER PRESENTATION SUMMARY

(By Jacques Bourgeois)

The November presentation was about the recent field trip to Snow Lake organized by the Mineral Society and attended by eight participants.

The first day was traveling day as it takes approximately 7 to 8 hours to get to Snow Lake. Three carloads of happy rockhounds made their way using various routes. Lisa and Robert took the scenic route via The Pas while TJ, Leanne and Justyn as well as Mario, Peter and I took the more direct route following highway #6 the whole way.

This route allowed us to stop at one of the most beautiful lake found in the province, Little Limestone Lake. This lake is a great example of a marl lake such as Lake Louise. It is actually listed as the world's largest and most dramatically colour-changing marl lake. Marl is created when calcite, a constituent of limestone, is precipitated from warm water. As the temperature rises, the quantity of marl increases. This physical phenomenon changes the colour of the lake, typically from a brilliant turquoise in the morning to a robin's egg blue by mid-afternoon, making it look like a little piece of the Caribbean right here in Manitoba!



Little Limestone Lake



Bluenose Bed & Breakfast

We all arrived in Snow Lake in the early evening. Some participants were staying at the Wekusko Falls Campground while others were staying at the Bluenose B&B so we decided to meet at the Snow Lake Motor Inn for some food and to discuss the itinerary of the next two days. The next morning, we all gathered bright and early at the mine site's main office for a safety briefing. Luckily for us, it poured rain heavily during the briefing but stopped just as we were done which meant that all the rocks would be sparkly clean for us!

Sarah Bernhauer, senior Geologist at the Lalor mine, had arranged for some of her staff to assist us during collecting. Matt and Daren (Zeke), two geologists at the mine, were very helpful and patient with us, showing us the best collecting piles and answering our many questions. They gave us a great informative session on the local geology and had beautiful mineral specimens for us representing some of the most common minerals found on site.

The first pile we collected from was a pile of discarded core samples which was quite popular with some members. It didn't take long for some of the collector's pails to be full!

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## THE MINERAL SOCIETY OF MANITOBA

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*The Mineral Vein* is published monthly from September to June.

**Meetings** are held on the first Wednesday of each month from September to May inclusive at the Manitoba Museum in room P47 on the Planetarium level. They begin at 7:30 PM and feature announcements, an invited speaker and a raffle. Members are encouraged to bring along any new, interesting specimens, or specimens appropriate to the speaker's topic.

**Field Trips** take place from May to September to interesting sites in Manitoba or neighbouring provinces and states.

**Membership:** A single membership is \$15 while a family membership is \$20. Memberships run from October to October.

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### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### **December 7, 2016, 5:30 pm : Annual Christmas Party.**

Save the date and mark your calendar for our annual Christmas Party. This year, we have decided to hold the party at the Manitoba Museum, in our regular meeting room. The meal will be catered by Luigi's. We will have potluck-style dessert station so we encourage members to bring some tasty desserts to share. The meal will be free for members but non-members will be asked to pay for the meal (approx. \$15). Our traditional auction will not be held at the Christmas Party this year but rather at a later time during the year. Get ready for a great evening of good food and good company. **Please contact Marion to confirm your attendance at (204) 775-0625**

**January 4, 2017: Regular Meeting of the Mineral Society of Manitoba** room P47 (Lower/Planetarium level) in the Manitoba Museum 7:30 p.m.

Guest speaker to be announced.



Founded in 1971, the Mineral Society of Manitoba is dedicated to promoting the study of minerals, rocks and fossils for their scientific and recreational value.

The Mineral Society of Manitoba hosts monthly meetings covering a variety of mineral related topics. In addition, the Mineral Society organizes summer field trips to collecting localities, and hosts educational exhibits about minerals and fossils.

## NOVEMBER PRESENTATION (CONT.)



Core samples pile

We collected sphalerite, pyrite, chalcopyrite, kyanite, ghanite, quartz, staurolite and garnets until lunch time at which time most of our collecting pails were quite full.



Collecting from the tailing pile



Happy collectors' pails

In the afternoon, we were treated to a tour of the Snow Lake Mining Museum by museum board chair, Paul Hawman. The museum has a great collection of mining artifacts and the mineral collection alone was well worth the visit.



Mining Museum display

After the visit of the museum, we went to an outcrop along the shore of Snow Creek to find staurolites and garnets. The rocks were very hard and after finding some good specimens here and there, we decided to call it the day.



Collecting along Snow Creek

The following day, we were lucky to have our own private guide for the day. Bill Salahub, geologist at the Lalor mine, was on a day off and offered to tour us around. He showed us the old rock pile from the New Britannia and Anderson mines where we found mostly kyanite and garnets. He also showed us the original claim in Snow Lake where gold was first discovered.

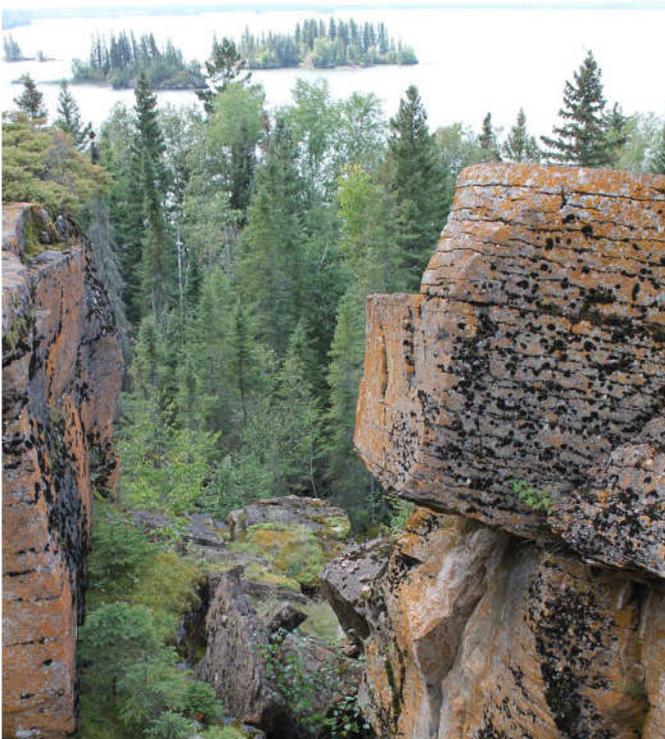
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## NOVEMBER PRESENTATION (CONT.)



The original Snow Lake claim

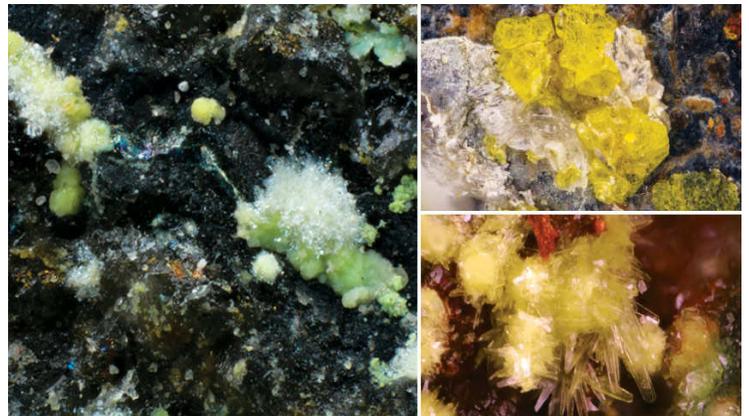
We finished the day with a visit to two very scenic spots. The first one was at Herb Lake Landing on the east shore of Wekusko Lake. Following a short but steep climb at times, we reached the top of the limestone cliff where we were rewarded with a view that was nothing short of fantastic. The last stop of the day was at Wekusko Falls Provincial Park where the Manitoba Lowlands and Precambrian Shield meet. At this location, the Grass River plunges almost 12 metres through a series of scenic falls and rapids. A short trail and two suspension bridges offer great views of the falls and the lake.



## THE HUNT FOR NEW CARBON MINERALS

You may remember an article published in the January edition of the Mineral Vein about the Carbon Mineral Challenge where professional geologists and amateur mineral collectors were encouraged to scour the planet for carbon-bearing minerals in the hope of finding new minerals. Scientists believe carbon minerals evolved over time and 406 varieties have been found so far. New ones have been popping up at a rate of about four a year since 2010, but scientists estimate there are at least 145 yet to be discovered.

It looks like they had some interesting results with seven new minerals discovered this year.



Abellaite, ewingite and leószilárdite (clockwise from left) are three of the seven carbon-bearing minerals recognized by the International Mineralogical Association in the past year.

One of the most unusual mineral found to date is by far tinnunculite. Scientists found the yellowish-white crystals in a very unexpected milieu: inside the residue of bird poop that had landed on extremely hot rocks overlying an underground coal fire in northwestern Russia. The highly elevated temperatures produced the crystallization of uric acid in the excrement. The exotic mineral was dubbed tinnunculite to honor the European kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), whose indispensable contribution to mineralogy cannot be denied. A search is on to find dozens more undiscovered carbon minerals.

